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The Role of Cultural Traditions on Branding and Word-Of-Mouth: Keeping Mother's Recipes Alive!

Sindy Chapa, Florida State University

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore the impact a cultural tradition has on a perceived-brand-relationship (PBR) and word-of-mouth (WOM) behavior in person and electronically. Based on the cognitive-motivational-related theory of emotions and the social identity theory, a model is proposed to explain the impact that a family tradition, such as cooking with selective products, has on Hispanic mothers. Using a research mixed-method approach, a construct was developed to measure attitudes toward cultural traditions. Further, an online survey was administered for hypotheses and model testing using SEM and Logistic Regression tests.

Latina Mom Bloggers, a social media-marketing platform, was used to promote the study among Hispanic mothers during a three weeks period. A total of 338 Hispanic mothers completed the survey. The questionnaire was available in English and Spanish, and included questions related to brand familiarity (screening), perceived brand relationship, perceived importance of cultural traditions in the Kitchen, and word-of-mouth consumption. Mazola Corn Oil was identified in the exploratory stage as the unit of analysis to measure brand familiarity; through a qualitative investigation, it was observed that Hispanics would switch from using X Olive Oil Brand to Mazola Corn Oil when cooking traditional Hispanic dishes such as Spanish rice, enchiladas, chilaquiles, chile relleno, and albondigas.

Overall, this study provides valuable contributions for theory and practice. Theoretically, this study developed an exclusive measure for cultural traditions based on an inductive qualitative approach and quantitative techniques. The item-identification processes, followed by the quantitative results show that attitudes toward cultural traditions can be measured using a 5-item scale. The model proposed in this study supports the hypotheses indicating that: 1) A stronger perception toward cultural traditions leads to increase favorable brand relationship strength; 2) Perceived-brand-relationship strength affects positive word-of-mouth for the brand; Positive attitudes toward word-of-mouth on the brand affects WOM behavior.

For practice, the results can assist in the understanding of cultural traditions as a predictor of brand equity. When a brand is linked to a cultural tradition, a relationship between a consumer and a brand is naturally created with a predisposition to share positive information about the brand with family, and friends (WOM) in person or via social media (eWOM). Marketing professionals should identify cultural traditions within segments and use the traditions to connect their brand names with the target markets.

About the Author

Dr. Sindy Chapa is an Assistant Professor and the Director of The Center for Hispanic Marketing Communication at Florida State University (FSU). She is one of the country's leading researchers on cross-cultural consumer behavior and how it relates to marketing, advertising and all other aspects of business. Dr. Chapa earned an MBA at St. Thomas University and a Ph.D. in International Business & Marketing from The University of Texas RGV. Dr. Chapa previously served on the faculty of Texas State University where she co-founded and helped lead the Center for the Study of Latino Media and Markets. As a faculty member at FSU, Dr. Chapa teaches courses on Multicultural and Hispanic marketing. Dr. Chapa has published in recognized academic journals as the *International Journal of Advertising*, *Journal of Advertising Research*, *International Business & Economics Research*, *Journal of Marketing Communication*, *Journal of Spanish Language Media*, and *Journal of Consumer Behavior among others*. Email Dr. Chapa at schapa@fsu.edu.

